



Attn.: Director General Vitcheva
European Commission - DG MARE
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Ref. R-02-21/WG5

Brussels / Madrid, 5th of May 2021

Subject: Joint EUROPECHE-ETF-LDAC request for the transposition of key legal international instruments on maritime safety and labour in fisheries

In 2020, the UN specialized agencies IMO, ILO, FAO jointly published the document *“Joining forces to shape the fishery sector of tomorrow”* which provides guidance to policy, decision-makers and other stakeholders in the fisheries, maritime, and labour sectors with a view to promote the ratification and implementation of fisheries-related international instruments.

The stakeholders represented by the LDAC and the EU Social Partners in the fisheries sector (henceforth, “we”) cannot agree more with the primary goal of the international community and the EU to adopt international fisheries standards that promote safety and good working conditions for fishers, training, and responsible fishing operations. Particularly, given the fact that capture fisheries are widely recognised as one of the most hazardous professions in the world.

For this purpose, the undersigned organisations welcome the introduction of the *“evaluation of fishing vessel safety”* within the European Commission Work Programme 2021¹. This will help to address the issue of the non-ratification of the IMO Torremolinos Convention for the Safety of Fishing Vessels, 1977 as amended (FVS). Even though this Convention has been transposed in the EU by Directive 97/70/EC, the FVS has not yet entered into force and has been ratified only by six EU Member States. A similar situation happens with the 2012 IMO Cape Town Agreement (CTA), which will replace FVS once it comes into force and was ratified by only 8 EU Member States as of 1 March 2021.

Nevertheless, we regret that, despite the repeated demands from EU fisheries stakeholders, the European Commission has not included in its work programme a proposal for a European Directive to incorporate the IMO Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel, 1995 (STCW-F 95) into the *acquis communautaire*. We reiterate that this action would be fundamental to guarantee harmonized training and certification standards and enhanced maritime safety in the fishing sector.

Furthermore, the LDAC and the EU Social Partners welcome the increasing ratification numbers of another fundamental instrument, the ILO Work in Fishing Convention (ILO C188). Denmark, Estonia, France, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal are the EU Member States that have ratified to date the convention. We urge the other EU Member States to ratify C188 too because the EU fisheries stakeholders would like to consolidate a level playing field on social standards within the EU and also world-wide. We also recall that the ILO C188 has been transposed into European legislation through Directive (EU) 2017/159.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2021_commission_work_programme_annexes_en.pdf



In this context, we urge EU Member States that have not yet implemented the Directive into their national law, to do so as quickly as possible since the deadline given was 15 November 2019.

Additionally, as previously done rapidly for the maritime transport sector, it is equally important for the European Commission to present, as quickly as possible, a proposal for an accompanying directive to include compliance and enforcement provisions. This is fundamental to establish a harmonised inspections system on the standards set in Directive (EU) 2017/159. We therefore strongly encourage the European Commission to include this issue in its work programme as a matter of great urgency.

The stakeholders represented by our organisations are fully committed to achieve the aforementioned objectives and make progress on the social dimension of fisheries as part of the three pillars of sustainability at global level.

SIGNED BY REPRESENTATIVES

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